

***Camissonia minor* (A. Nels.) Raven**

small flower evening primrose

Onagraceae (Evening Primrose Family)

Status: State Sensitive

Rank: G4S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961): *Camissonia minor* is a 2 to 10 in. (5-25 cm) tall annual, with a main stem that is usually branched at the base, but simple above. The basal leaves have long petioles with oblong-lanceolate to oblanceolate blades that are 1/3 to 2 in. (1-5 cm) long, and 1/8 to 1/2 in. (4-15 mm) broad. The blades gradually reduce in size towards the top of the plant until they are merely linear bracts that lack petioles in the upper part of the spikes. The flowers arise from near the base of the plant to the top and are attached directly to flowering branches. The petals are about 1/16 in. (0.8-1.3 mm) long, obovate, and pale yellowish or off-white, usually aging to pink. The capsules are 1/2 to 1 in. (12-25 mm) long, linear, scarcely enlarged at the base, and usually very conspicuously contorted and often somewhat coiled.

Identification Tips: Within its range in Washington *Camissonia minor* may be confused with *C. contorta* and *C. pygmaea* (also sensitive in Washington). Their petals and capsules can distinguish them. The petals of *C. minor* are 1/16 in. (0.8-1.3 mm) long and pale yellowish or off-white, usually aging to pink, while the petals of *C. contorta* are 1/8 to 1 1/2 in. (2.5-4 mm) long and yellow, and the petals of *C. pygmaea* are 1/16 to 1/8 in. (1.5-2.5 mm) long and white aging to pinkish. The capsules of *C. minor* are 1/2 to 1 in. (12-25 mm) long and very conspicuously contorted, while the capsules of *C. contorta* are 3/4 to 1 1/2 in. (20-40 mm) long and conspicuously arched to coiled, and the capsules of *C. pygmaea* are 1/3 to 1/2 in. (8-15 mm) long, wider at the base and less contorted than the capsules of *C. minor*.

Phenology: In Washington this species has been seen in flower and fruit from early May through early June.

Range: This species is distributed throughout from Washington south to California and east to Wyoming. In Washington it has been found in Benton and Grant counties, and historically in Yakima County.

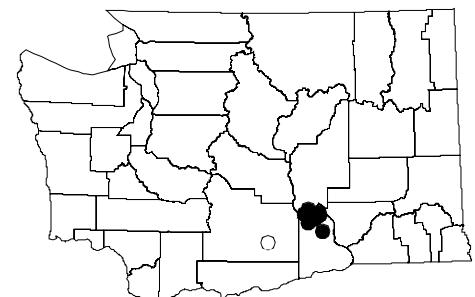
Camissonia minor

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Known distribution
of *Camissonia minor*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)

○ Historic (older than 1980)

Camissonia minor

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Karl Urban

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Habitat: This species has been found in gravelly basalt, sandy soils and cryptogamic crust from 460 to 1140 feet (140-347 m) elevation. Associated species at one or more sites include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), and Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*).

Ecology: Because the species is an annual, population numbers and exact location are likely to vary from year to year according to weather conditions.

State Status Comments: In Washington the species is known from less than 10 recent occurrences, all within the Department of Energy's Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory is needed throughout the Department of Energy's Hanford Nuclear Reservation, on the Yakima Training Center, and in other central Washington shrub-steppe areas.

Threats and Management Concerns: Most of the sites within the Hanford Nuclear Reservation are closed to public use and grazing. Sites open to the public should avoid ORV use and grazing.

Comments: Hitchcock (1961) refers to *Camissonia minor* (A. Nels.) Raven as *Oenothera minor* var. *cusickii* Munz, and *C. pygmaea* as *Oenothera boothii* Dougl. ex. Lehm. var. *pygmaea* (Dougl. ex Lehm.) T. & G.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson.
1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 614 pp.

Kartesz, J.T. & C.A. Meacham. 2003. *Synthesis of the North American Flora, Version 2.0*.